

SENATE BILL 833
By Graves

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-1-104,
relative to maximum class size.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-1-104, is amended by adding the
following language as a new subsection:

(f)

(1) The commissioner of education is authorized to establish the "Matrix Class Size Pilot Project" effective with the 2003-04 academic year. This pilot project for determining maximum class sizes in Tennessee shall be based on rational, objective and methodically gathered data reflective of the level of student need as it relates to teacher parity. This project shall initially be limited to nine (9) local education agencies statewide with no more than three (3) in any one grand division.

(2) The following guiding principles shall be used in developing this pilot project:

(A) Maximum class sizes for special education shall be the same as reflected in the Basic Education Program (BEP) funding formula, provided, however, that student counts are based on their support needs.

(B) All students with disabilities shall be educated in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent possible.

(C) Students with disabilities shall be included in the student count for purposes of determining class size and caseload determinations.

(3) Class size and caseload determinations shall be based on objective criteria that will best meet the needs of students.

(A) Students with high needs for support services shall be weighted differently for purposes of class size determination than students with low support needs.

(B) Weighting of students should result in equitable class sizes and caseloads so that no teacher has an unfair number of high need students.

(C) The instrument used to assess the level of student needs in the classroom shall be equally applicable to students with and without Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

SECTION 2. The commissioner of education shall report to the select oversight committee on education on the status of the project.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003, the public welfare requiring it.